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URBAN ARCHITECTS & DESIGNERS

PPS5 Statement to support a Listed Building Application for 5th Floor of Bridgewater House

Client:
Bruntwood
June 2012
Job 1444



Introduction

Makin Architecture have been commissioned by Bruntwood to oversee the design of the 5th floor reburbishment of Bridgewater House, Whitworth Street Manchester. Accompanying this application and this report is a set of drawings describing the works and how they relate to the listed building. The Historic Building Appraisal is also included along with a brief schedule of works for demolition and newbuild elements.



Bridgewater House as seen from Whitworth Street.

History

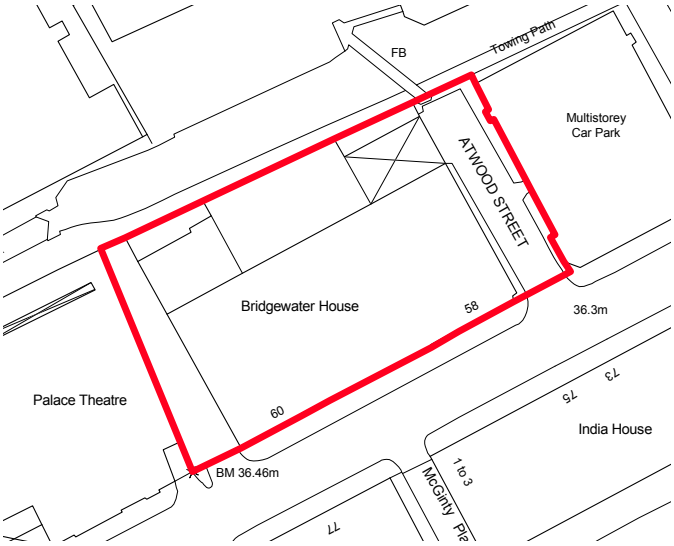
Bridgewater House Listing

Manchester SJ8497NW Whitworth Street 698-1/32/438 (North Side) Nos. 58 and 60 Bridgewater House GV11 Shipping Warehouse, now offices. 1912, by Harry S. Fairhurst. Steel frame with cladding of Sandstone Ashlar and White Glazed Terracotta (roof concealed). Large rectangular plan, with loading bar at rear. Eclectic style.

Eight storeys with basement, 19 bays, symmetrical, with strong horizontal division, the first 2 floors of stone, treated as rustic with channelled rusticated piers, moulded frieze and prominent modillioned cornice, the upper floors of White Glazed Terracotta, the 2nd floor with a prominent panelled cornice on coupled brackets, the next 4 floors with tiered canted bay windows in alternate bays, and modillioned main cornice interrupted in the centre by a 5-bay penthouse with pilastered end bays and a parapet with upstand. The ground floor has a massive sill-band (over rock-faced piers at basement level), interrupted between the 6th and 9th and the 14th and 17th bays by square-headed entrances with doorways which have profile medallions of the Duke of Bridgewater on the lintels and 3-light overlights at 1st floor level; otherwise, each bay has metal-framed windows to the ground and 1st floors and bronze panels between these. The upper floors have square windows (except the canted bays) and various forms of enrichment including geometric panels, fasces, wreaths and corrupt-leaf pendants. Return sides have 2 bays in matching style (with monogram at 6th floor level) and continue in plain rectilinear grid form. Interior not inspected. Forms group with Palace Theatre to left (q.v) and Refuge Assurance Building (q.v) and India House opposite (q.v).



Bridgewater House as seen from the rear



As is the case with many 'listings', the above is not exactly accurate. The plan for instance, is 'U' shaped rather than rectangular and the stone plinth is granite rather than sandstone. There are two goods entrances, one at the West end of the Whitworth Street façade and the other at the North end of Atwood Street. Correctly attributed as the work of Harry S. Fairhurst, who had earlier designed nearby Asia House (1900-10), India House (1905) and Lancaster House (1909), this building was constructed as a packing and shipping warehouse with the offices located on the Whitworth Street Elevation and the goods handling etc taking place at the rear. Two goods lifts were located at the junction of the main building with the rear 'legs' though the one in the West wing has been removed through much of the building.

With the decline of the cotton trade the building became offices and by 1974 was in the ownership of Standard Life Assurance of Edinburgh, In 1975 a major refurbishment of the building took place during which the building had the terracotta and stonework cleaned and repaired as well as the, unfortunate replacement of 631 steel windows by Kawneer "Satin Bronze" Aluminum units. Only at the upper level do any of the original windows remain. The Edwardian Lavatory accommodation at the topmost level was removed and a flat created. Only some of the glazed brickwork remains at this level and the flat itself is now office accommodation. The building was scaffolded to do this work and, such is the size of the building, it is claimed that it was the greatest length of scaffold tube ever used on a project to that date.

Between 1975 and 1985 further works were undertaken including, according to the consultant Chris Spreckley, the installation of an additional fire escape.. From other research it would seem likely that there were actually 2 fire escapes because there is no evidence of a single staircase on any floor and the building, as was often the case in buildings of this age, was actually two mirror halves. At that time the building was fully tenanted by the Post Office but current tenure is a multiplicity of tenants encompassing office and educational functions.





existing ceiling void showing small clearance under un-decorative downstands

existing window bulkhead detail



Proposals

At the present time, floors 4, 5 and 6 are occupied by the British Council. As part of their restructuring they are intending to vacate floors 4 and 5 consolidating their organisation on the 6th floor. When the organisation moved into the premises it formed two new staircases, one from the 4th to the 5th and a second one from 5th to 6th. These are to be removed and the floor reinstated as part of this application. The remainder of the works forming the application are for the upgrading and re-con figuring of the 5th floor to meet the needs of the incoming tenant.

Briefly the works shown on the enclosed drawings are as follows –

Floors

Existing raised access floor remains as existing. Although there are some small proposed modifications to the ramps.

Ceilings:

The existing suspended ceiling is to be cut back from the external envelope by at least 1000mm from the face of the piers between windows at the front and sides of the building. This will be much greater where there are bay windows and such like. The level of the suspended ceiling will remain unchanged but will be refurbished. Because of the clearance which is needed for the ventilation and cooling systems the level cannot be raised.

The existing ceilings are plastered direct to the concrete sofit and contain no detail. A nominal 50mm void will be included, where there is no suspended ceiling, in order to accommodate cables etc. Because there is a structural downstand above the windows this will have minimum impact on the relationship of the windows to the external envelope.

Where setting back the suspended ceiling will bisect a small room in an unacceptable way the edge of the suspended ceiling will line up with the new partitions. This will give these offices the benefit of taller ceiling



plant deck with plant to be removed show with *

M+E Installation

Floors 4, 5 and 6 have an inter-connected air conditioning system and this will have to be removed and a new independent system installed. The roof, at the rear of the building, has a metal grid deck on which condensers and other elements can be fixed. As part of this exercise two, very large, pieces of redundant ventilation equipment will be removed and replaced by six, much smaller, condensers. The are shown on the submitted drawings.

Partitions

The bulk of the requirement is for large open plan offices. However, there is a requirement for some partitioning and details are included as part of this application. The partitions are designed be glazed in places and where solid, to have a shadow gap in order to separate the new fabric from the original fabric of the building.

Summary

The existing suspended ceiling will be cut back to reveal as much of the original volume as possible; The non-original staircases will be removed and the floor reinstated; a large section of redundant ventilation system will be removed from the roof and replaced by smaller and more compact units.

Access Statement

Bridgewater House has had various alterations and enhancements over the years to improve the accessibility of the building. The central entrance on the ground floor allows a level access from the street and a platform lift allows for level access of the lift lobbies from the central entrance. On the floors, raised floors are ramped from the lift lobbies to provide wheelchair access to the floors. Disabled facilities are available on every floor.